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JOHN F. KENNEDY SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

RE-SHAPING U.S. FOREIGN POLICY TOWARD CUBA: A STRATEGIC OUTREACH



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Executive Summary

Decades of bitter experience teach a clear lesson: Progress is impossible when nations emphasize their grievances and ignore their opportunities.

—President George W. Bush

President Bush's comment refers to the present crisis in the Middle East, but could just as easily apply to U.S.-Cuba relations. For more than 40 years, the United States and Cuba have engaged in a test of wills, resulting in a present-day international impasse. Current U.S. policy towards Cuba, relying heavily on sanctions and isolation, requires that democratic reforms be implemented and that the Castro family remove themselves from governance prior to any possibility of normalizing diplomatic relations. Fidel Castro, whose legacy has largely been forged through his unwillingness to cede to U.S. demands, remains firmly in control, and will likely be succeeded by his brother Raul. Of great concern to the U.S. is what will happen to Cuba upon the demise of Fidel Castro. Uncontrolled migration, rampant crime and increased drug trafficking are all plausible, and such instability presents a viable concern to U.S. national interests.

The Bush administration has thus far adhered to the hard-line policy embodied within the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Helms-Burton Act). Yet, the President has left the door open to better relations. He has continued to waive Title III requirements, has presided over the first food sale to Cuba in 40 years, and has preserved ongoing migration, search-and-rescue, and drug-trafficking security cooperation between the nations. The authors posit that neither the status quo, nor two other potential policy choices (heightened sanctions or immediate

normalization), represents the best course of action to promote U.S. interests. Rather, they defend another solution – “Strategic Outreach” – as an alternative.

The status quo is rejected as being overly stringent and a carryover of the Cold War era that does more damage than good for the United States as a foreign policy tool. Increasing punitive pressures in an attempt to bring democratic reforms is rejected as being counterproductive and responsive to only a vocal minority of Cuban expatriates, now American citizens. Immediate normalization of diplomatic relations is also seen as unfeasible, as Cuba and the United States have lacked normal and positive relations for such an extended period of time that the many necessary legal, economic and social frameworks do not exist to address very real problems that remain. The United States must immediately begin ironing out long-standing differences to better serve U.S. interests in both the near- and long-term. This will take time and is the reason why the authors believe in the concept of Strategic Outreach.

Strategic Outreach is premised upon a model similar to the route embarked upon by the United States during normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam only twenty years after that war ended. It is a multi-phased, systematic approach that builds upon small, specific successes achieved in the near-term (defined as one to three years) in order to achieve the long-term (seven to ten years) goal of diplomatic normalization. ***In the near term, the U.S. and Cuba must initiate processes for building trust; for the long-term future, they must continue those processes to reduce long-existing hostilities. A near-term clarification of our domestic political agenda is also an essential part of the plan.*** This will ensure that all interests are considered, not just those of a vocal

minority. Regional and global entities must also be leveraged to bring about reforms expected of a participant in today's global community.

Recommendations are offered in four key areas, loosely premised upon the elements of national power (political, diplomatic, information, and economic) available for influence. ***First, a Presidential-appointed bipartisan committee should be convened to assess U.S.-Cuba policy and to recommend new legislation for the future if needed.*** The use of such a committee will ensure the needs and desires of the society as a whole are considered, and will also serve as a signal to all stakeholders that the U.S. is amenable to new solutions to its 40-year-old Cuban dilemma. With a clearer picture of national interests and discrete objectives, such a committee would also help determine the best means (i.e., unilateral changes in policy vs. quid pro quo exchanges) to achieve them, thus resulting in better policy.

Second, we must continue to exchange ideas and seek a “common ground” if we are to break this impasse. Outreach efforts in this area should include medical and health research; continued artistic, musical, athletic, and cultural exchanges; and government-to-government exchanges, especially with second echelon members in the Cuban regime who may very well be the leaders in power in the near future. Efforts should also include business-to-business exploration, and continued joint academic exploration of long-standing issues such as human rights violations, economic barriers to free enterprise, and reparations for nationalized properties.

Third, relaxation of punitive measures should be undertaken if our policy truly intends to assist the Cuban populace. Recommendations include easing our economic punishment (e.g., further relaxing trade restrictions on medical and humanitarian goods,

and removing the limits on remittances to Cuban citizens in order to fund a civil society); lifting the ban on personal travel to Cuba, encouraging foundation investment by relaxing licensing requirements, and encouraging non-governmental organizations (NGO) participation. Additionally, we should consider a sunset provision to the Helms-Burton Act as a reward for positive cooperation from the Cuban government on select issues.

Finally, the U.S. should enlist the aid of the international community, to include Caribbean, Latin and South American countries, if we truly want to break the impasse and maintain stability in the region. However, to achieve the support and leverage from the world body politic, the U.S. must be willing to turn this from a bilateral test of wills to a truly international issue. Many in the international community are against our present policy toward Cuba (for example, the World Trade Organization is staunchly against our current use of sanctions), and there is assistance to be gained if we welcome others into the debate. Mexico and other regional countries are defending the readmission of Cuba to the OAS; and Caribbean neighbors are eager to see Cuba step into a post-Marxist environment. We must consider using the power of the world community to break the present U.S.-Cuban zero-sum philosophy.

The authors researched the issue using multiple resources, relying on recent publications, lectures, and interviews with political and academic experts. Qualitative rather than quantitative research is heavily relied upon, and options and recommendations have been discussed with area experts.

Introduction

History does indeed illustrate that those who do not, or choose not to, learn from the past are often doomed to repeat it. We suggest that United States-Cuba foreign policy provides just such an example. For more than four decades, the United States has pursued engagement with Cuba in a manner befitting the Cold War era, when missiles were pointed from that island nation toward our own cities. However, the Cold War has ended, and Russia, the once-feared chief sponsor of the communist ideology, is now allied with us in an effort to implement market reform and combat global terrorism. Yet, 90 miles off our coast, Cuba remains isolated by the United States. The potential problems looming on the horizon make this policy of isolation risky and ill advised.

By any rational measure, our Cuba policy has failed to accomplish anything other than to provide Castro with a convenient scapegoat. This has happened at the expense of the Cuban people and with the resulting paradoxical isolation of the United States on the world stage. This paper points to the failure of our “cold shoulder” policy toward Cuba and suggests that an alternative foreign policy be adopted using systematic analysis and problem-solving and negotiation techniques.

The U.S. has several potential policy options: continuing or further tightening the embargo; immediately terminating the current policy; or reaching out to Cuba through Strategic Outreach. The option of Strategic Outreach is the most practical and practicable option to implement.

Strategic Outreach addresses US-Cuba policy in a phased, systematic approach focused on near-, mid-, and long-term goals, with successive, incremental achievements

required to reach those goals. The first phase of the approach, focused on near-term (one to three years) objectives, relies on building trust, bridging the information gap, and reducing the hostility that has grown between the countries over a 40-year period. The second phase of the approach, focused on mid-term (three to seven year) objectives, reaches out to U.S. residents and clarifies U.S. domestic policy with regard to Cuba. The third phase, focused on long-term (five plus years) objectives, involves Strategic Outreach efforts to implement new foreign policy through bilateral and multinational efforts. This timeline is important in that near-term and mid-term efforts will help build a foundation that will be essential in a post-Fidel environment. It's also important to note that most of these efforts are possible (and necessary) with or without the participation or endorsement of Fidel Castro.

The authors reject the status quo as being a remnant of the Cold War, and the imperfect result of a squabble between vocal domestic agenda advocates and foreign trade enthusiasts.¹ We also reject the option of increasing the pressures on Cuba through more rigid enforcement of sanctions, believing that would be counterproductive in achieving U.S. goals. The authors believe Cuba would dig in deeper, their citizens would continue to suffer; and the U.S. reputation on the world stage, already criticized vis-à-vis Cuba, would sink further. We also argue that immediate normalization is neither practical nor practicable, as common linchpins of governance and agreement do not exist between the two countries after a 40-year standoff. Strategic Outreach is defended as the optimal solution for a foreign policy that best serves the interests of the United States.

Strategic Outreach hinges on several key activities. A bipartisan commission commissioned by the President is essential to review current policy and make

recommendations on a future course of action. Reducing the information and culture gap through joint academic and research efforts and continuing cultural exchange options are both essential to establishing trust and reducing the tension that has grown over the past four decades. Reliance on foundations and NGOs is necessary to sponsor neutral forums in which new ideas and lingering issues can be raised, debated, and resolved. Relaxation of some punitive measures that would aid the Cuban people (e.g., licensure requirements through the Treasury Department; easier visitation procedures for families; opening the door further for “cash and carry” humanitarian and medical sales, and removing the limits on remittances) is needed to signal to U.S. society, the Cuban government and populace, and world leaders at large that the U.S. is committed to resolving the long-standing problem. Finally, enlisting multinational aid to bring reforms to Cuba ensures that the final policy implementation will not be viewed by Cuba as a “U.S. dictated” change. Implementation of each of these recommendations will not come easily, and will require a strategic approach with a clear, objective-based focus.

Findings: The Present Situation

Although Not a Threat, The Cuban Situation Still Merits Concern

A critical concern the U.S. faces in 2002 is whether Cuba remains a threat to our national security. Recent Defense studies find that Cuba has ceased to be a viable threat to the U.S.², and other experts have even gone so far as to dismiss Castro’s relevance in a modern society, declaring him “...a relic of another era and another battle.”³ Communism as an ideology no longer incites the emotion and fear it once did, and since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, Russia has increasingly distanced itself from direct support of Cuba. The closing of the Russian Intelligence gathering station at

Lourdes, and demands from Russia that Cuba begin repaying loans have driven a wedge between the former leader of world communism and its primary protégé. Thus, some experts will state that despite Fidel Castro's desperate grasp onto communism and the ideology of "revolution," Cuba is no longer a threat to the Western Hemisphere. As recently as the late 1990's, then Commander in Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, Marine General Charles Wilhelm stated, "The (Cuban) armed forces has no capability whatsoever to project itself beyond the borders of Cuba, so it's really no threat to anyone around it . . . It does not even begin to resemble the Cuban armed forces that we contemplated in the 80's."⁴

However, the authors warn against being lulled into a state of inertia or disinterest simply because Cuba isn't viewed as a military threat. We believe Cuba presents a more subtle threat that merits attention and action. Only 90 miles from our southern shores, Cuba stands on a potential brink, facing an unknown destiny when its supreme leader is gone. As Amy Davis of CBS News recently posed the question, "...world leaders, devoted supporters and angry exiles have to wonder: What happens to Cuba when Fidel Castro dies?"⁵ The very real possibility of unchecked migration, rampant crime, drug trafficking, and potential political upheaval so near our shores makes for a viable threat to U.S. interests that demands immediate attention and focus.

The Hard Line Continues

The Bush administration has thus far continued down the path established by his predecessor, claiming no easing of the present Helms-Burton policy will be considered. President Bush's nomination of Otto Reich, a Cuban-American who migrated to the U.S. in 1959, as the Director of the State Department's Bureau of Western Hemisphere affairs

signals that the U.S. and Cuba are destined to remain on a path of divergence, at least for the foreseeable future. In his first statement since assuming the position, Mr. Reich claimed the United States could hasten a democratic transition in Cuba by "...not throwing a lifeline to a failed, corrupt, dictatorial, murderous regime."⁶

The hard line position assumed by the U.S. has, in fact, helped cement Cuba's position, and ensures the predictable reciprocal rhetoric. The U.S. goal of a peaceful, democratic change in Cuba is met by the Cuban response that they are willing to sit and discuss many issues, but changing regimes at the behest of the United States isn't one of them.⁷

However, the authors perceive that the door has been left ajar (though slightly) for improvement in relations. President Bush, as did the Clinton administration, has waived Title III of Helms-Burton, and Title VI remains weakly enforced. Cooperation between the two nations' Coast Guards in enforcing drug trafficking and preventing migration violations remains collegial. And, after Cuba was hit by a devastating hurricane, the U.S. and Cuba were able to consummate the first food sale in over 40 years, with an American-flagged cargo ship landing directly in a Cuban harbor.

The authors believe formal, meaningful discussion between the two governments is not possible if we don't formally depart from our present course of action. Diplomatic efforts to signal intentions have blurred to the point of obscurity. And yet, a potential crisis looms close on the horizon.

The Evolving World Landscape: A Door Opened to Change

The intractable positions staked out by both sides are as much the result of public pride as unreasonable policy. A shifting world landscape, dominated by the recent events of September 11th, offers the face-saving opportunity needed to resolve the U.S.-Cuba impasse. As the U.S. explores relations and alignments with once formidable foes and non-democratic regimes in the fight against global terrorism, we have to ask ourselves if an exploration of our foreign policy toward Cuba is possible as well. As Alberto Coll of the United States Naval War College in Newport, RI recently stated in an address to the Foreign Policy Research Institute, “The U.S. could speed change in Cuba through exerting subtle influences. There are both domestic and foreign pressures for change.”⁸

World opinion of our sanctions against Cuba also dictates that the time is right for change. Both the World Trade Organization and the United Nations General Assembly have overwhelmingly condemned the U.S.’s sanctions policy against Cuba, with only Israel and the Marshall Islands supporting the U.S.⁹ In an interesting twist, some believe the policy reveals more about the U.S. than Cuba, and contend that our policy of isolating Cuba in fact accomplishes the opposite, and isolates the U.S. on the world stage.¹⁰

Despite the Bush administration’s refusal to consider a shift in policy, there is growing domestic interest in exploring such a shift. Numerous delegations comprising present and former members of Congress, business executives, and academicians have traveled to Cuba in the recent past, and their collective voices are increasingly proffering the same recommendation: It’s time to change, and a comprehensive strategy is necessary to guide that change.

Notes

¹ Soraya M. Castro-Marino, *A New Approach to U.S.-Cuba Relations: The Possibility of Enhancing the Sovereignty of Both Countries and the Promotion of Hemispheric Security*, (Havana: Centro de Estudios Sobre Estados Unidos, Universidad de Las Habana, Cuba, 2001) 18. Presented at the 42nd Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, February 20-24, 2001, Chicago, IL.

² Defense Department Report, *The Cuban Threat to U.S. National Security* (Washington: Government Printing Office, May 1998) iii.

³ Jim Hoagland, *Tiptoeing 'Round a Relic* (Washington Post, 7 January 1999) A25.

⁴ Castro-Marino, 27

⁵ Amy N. Davis, *Once Castro's Gone, What Next?* (CBSNews.com, Wed., 15 August, 2001).

⁶ George Gedda, *US official vows no 'lifeline' for Cuba*, (Boston Globe, March 13, 2002) A21.

⁷ *Cuba and the United States: Approaches to Engagement, Report of the Thirty-Ninth Strategy for Peace Conference October 29-31, 1998*, (Iowa: The Stanley Foundation) 7.

⁸ Alberto Coll, address, Foreign Policy Research Institute, 4 October 2001.

⁹ Sally Grooms Cowal, personal interview, 4 March 2002.

¹⁰ Cowal, interview.

Strategic Outreach Defined

Strategic Outreach, reduced to its simplest elements, is similar to a negotiation strategy that strives to create a satisfying solution for a number of parties with disparate and competing interests. In the U.S.-Cuba policy sphere, the involved parties have staked intractable claims over the years and have become so entrenched in their positions that a zero-sum philosophy prevails. The authors believe that a solution to this issue can only be achieved through a three-phased approach focused on achieving discrete, measurable goals satisfactory to all parties.

- **Phase One** requires low-level interactions between Cuban and U.S. government members and residents in order to build trust and understanding.
- **Phase Two** focuses on clarifying the U.S. domestic political position on Cuba, ascertaining what unilateral actions should be taken to further U.S. interests, and determining what quid pro quo events must occur to improve relations.
- **Phase Three** looks at implementing a comprehensive foreign policy toward Cuba that ensures national security, reflects the desires of U.S. citizens, and is accepted as reasonable on the world stage.

Phase One of Strategic Outreach involves the continuation of low-level interactions that are short of formal diplomatic relations. Such constructive engagement serves to build trust between members of the Cuban and American governments, and seeks to reduce the information gap that has grown between the two countries over a 40-year period.¹¹ These low-level contacts, which have been conducted in the past in the art, athletic, and cultural arenas, help to build ties, reduce hostility, and identify common

ground between parties. As long as the official rhetoric between our governments remains hostile, lower level diplomacy may very well offer the best hope for keeping the lines of communication flowing, and may provide the only platform upon which a lasting resolution may be built. This was critically important when normalizing diplomatic relations with Vietnam, and the authors believe a similar approach needs to be applied to U.S.-Cuban relations.

As well as reducing hostility and identifying common ground, such interaction is often the best low-risk means for the U.S. to signal intent domestically and internationally. As the first phase of Strategic Outreach, continued low-level interaction respects the notion of sovereignty, focuses on trust building, seeks similarities versus emphasizing differences, and sets the stage for long-term normalized diplomatic relations.

The history of the U.S.-Cuban standoff is long and complex. Unraveling the situation is an integral part of stepping forward. Therefore, the second phase of Strategic Outreach requires that an accurate assessment of the U.S.'s current policy be conducted. However, assessing U.S. policy is not an easy task. Critics of our on-going 40-year embargo claim that any easement of the sanction has been skillfully prevented by a very vocal Cuban expatriate contingent in south Florida that is vehemently opposed to such a move. Thus, foreign policy has become hostage to internal, domestic politics.¹²

A key part then of the Strategic Outreach approach requires that the U.S. domestic agenda be clarified with regard to U.S.-Cuban policy. Numerous polls indicate that the American public at large wants a policy toward Cuba that is more rational and less extreme than the present law embodied in the Helms-Burton Act.¹³ The business

community has long wanted to explore opportunities in Cuba, and the political community has become more vocal as of late about change as well. However, well-organized groups such as the Cuban American National Foundation have held a lock on the legislative agenda for years. Clearly, a sound foreign policy toward Cuba cannot be based on the emotional rhetoric of a vocal minority, but should rather be reflective of the desires of the American populace as a whole.

Thus, **Phase Two** of Strategic Outreach aims to clarify the U.S. domestic agenda with regard to Cuba by actively “reaching out” to the American society, not just a few special interest groups with their own prioritized objectives. The authors believe that prior to turning attention outside U.S. borders to exercise this foreign policy, the U.S. must first ensure that the policy reasonably strives to attain domestic objectives, and that it works in concert with macro-level foreign policy. “Reaching out” to the citizenship ensures that will be accomplished, and provides a roadmap of those actions that can reasonably be achieved unilaterally (e.g., the possible cessation of the travel ban), and those actions that would continue to be negotiable points with Cuba.

Phase Three of Strategic Outreach focuses on implementing a clearly defined foreign policy toward Cuba based on a more stable, secure and mutually beneficial relationship. The authors believe that through continued outreach efforts and with a clarified domestic agenda the United States could begin exercising a more refined foreign policy grounded in reality and based on current U.S. objectives. The third phase focuses on using bilateral and multilateral efforts to enact a foreign policy toward Cuba that the authors believe would be more in line with the present, pro-trade global approach the U.S. favors.

The authors also looked at **three alternative courses of action** that could be pursued:

- **Maintaining the status quo**, as presently embodied in the Helms-Burton Act.
- **Tightening sanctions.**
- **Immediately normalizing relations.**

The two aims of Helms-Burton are to “protect United States nationals against confiscatory takings and the wrongful trafficking in property confiscated by the Castro regime,”¹⁴ and to, “assist the Cuban people in regaining their freedom and prosperity, as well as in joining the community of democratic countries that are flourishing in the Western Hemisphere.”¹⁵ The law is broken into four titles. Titles I and II describe and codify the embargo, requiring the President to receive congressional approval prior to any relaxation, and establishing rules to govern U.S.-Cuban relations during a future transition. Title III establishes the right for U.S. citizens (and after 1998, Cuban immigrants who became U.S. citizens after Castro assumed control) to take legal action against foreign entities who “traffic” in property confiscated by Castro in 1959. Each President has continually waived enactment of this Title since the law was established. Title IV forbids granting visas to corporate officers (and their family members) of firms that traffic in such property, and has rarely been enforced.¹⁶

The second alternative, to increase the pressure on Cuba by tightening sanctions, would essentially mean taking Helms-Burton and tightening several of its provisions. For example, visitors are presently allowed to travel to Cuba for educational or humanitarian purposes, and it is common knowledge that travelers spend American dollars in Cuba outside the auspices of their sponsors’ Treasury Department license. Sen.

Jesse Helms, (R-NC), has threatened to pursue the law more vigorously, close such loopholes, and even to amend the law to require implementation of Title III.¹⁷

The final option considered, to swiftly normalize relations between the countries by repealing Helms-Burton and establishing full diplomatic ties immediately, is self-explanatory.

The authors believe that by taking the time to build solid relations, clarify domestic policy, and leverage the collective strength of trading partners, international bodies, and other third party intermediaries, the United States would stand a better chance of breaking through the current impasse and achieving national objectives versus the present or alternate approaches. Clearly, Strategic Outreach is the logical choice to pursue.

Notes

¹¹ Castro-Marino, 31.

¹² Castro-Marino, 20.

¹³ Cowal, interview.

¹⁴ Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, P.L. 104-14, sec 3(6).

¹⁵ Cuban Democratic Act, sec 3(1).

¹⁶ Mark A. Groombridge, *Missing the Target: The Failure of the Helms-Burton Act*, (Washington: CATO Institute, Trade Briefing Paper No. 12, June 5, 2001) 2.

¹⁷ Groombridge 2.

Criteria and Assumptions

Our research, which looked closely at the model used in the normalization process with Vietnam (and to a lesser extent, a similar model used with China), allowed us to identify several criteria we believe are essential for establishing a reasonable policy toward Cuba. The authors believe that U.S. policy toward Cuba must possess the following characteristics:

- Must address national security concerns.
- Must be goal and objective-oriented.
- Must be realistic and feasible for both countries.
- Must use trust-building measures in a low-threat environment.
- Diligent investigation of issues is necessary due to complexity.
- Must be flexible to allow U.S. to adapt to shifting international landscape.
- Must begin prior to Castro's demise, to give emerging leaders the opportunity to exert influence.
- Must realistically consider the forces of globalization.

Based upon the preceding, we examined and rejected the aforementioned alternative foreign policy options, believing they did not meet the criteria for success. From a top-level perspective, we believe Strategic Outreach is the optimal approach for examining all facets of the present U.S.-Cuba issue and offering realistic and reasonable solutions. Other options tend to focus heavily on the short term, rely on measures that prolong the impasse, downplay the necessity to address Cuba as an integral member of the regional and international community, or fail to consider the opinions of numerous stakeholders.

In arriving at the decision that Strategic Outreach was the best approach for the U.S. to adopt we operated under several assumptions. First, we assume no “smoking gun” exists within the classified realm that would make working with Cuba a no-go situation.

Thus, the door is open for improving relations with Cuba. Second, we assume that there is a strong possibility that Fidel Castro would not fully endorse or embrace open relations with the U.S. His legacy, founded on revolution, has only been bolstered through the years by the U.S. anti-Castro position. Clearly, the single person who stands to lose the most from normalized relations with the United States is Fidel Castro himself, and therefore any policy option that will succeed must be flexible enough to adapt to a Cuba that is governed by Fidel, Raul, or any other successor. As Fidel's brother, co-leader of the revolution, and present day leader of Cuba's military, Raul is believed to be Fidel's likely successor. We presume he will receive the necessary Cuban constitutional approval to assume control upon Fidel's demise.

The final assumption considers that both Fidel and Raul appear content to allow mid-level members of the Cuban government, those most likely to rise to power in a post-Castro environment, to engage in discourse with the U.S. government. Moderate government-to-government interchange has occurred between the two countries over the years despite the bitter rhetoric that often appears publicly.¹⁸

With the issue framed by the authors' assumptions and criteria for successful policy, we can further analyze each policy option using the established criteria and demonstrate why we believe Strategic Outreach is the preferred path.

Must address National Security concerns.

Of specific importance to the U.S.-Cuba issue is the level of stability and predictability our foreign policy can provide, thus removing uncertainty and instability that presently overshadow future relations. Solid policy will mitigate the U.S.'s vulnerability to new or unforeseen risks, and will help alleviate Cuba's perception that

the United States is dictating its affairs. Simultaneously, it will help remove the perception in the world's eyes that the extraterritorial legislation embodied in Helms-Burton is hypocritical.¹⁹

An attempt to immediately restore diplomatic relations ignores that there are legitimate issues that need to be resolved between our two nations, and that a great level of wariness exists between the U.S. and Cuba - with good reason. As Ambassador Dennis Hays points out, "Our (American) older generation remembers this is a country that was willing to use nukes on us."²⁰ Cubans likewise point out the American support of the Batista regime, and are quick to remind us of the Bay of Pigs incident. Therefore, security becomes a key issue, and any policy option selected must acknowledge the fact that Cuba is important not just for trade, but because secondary issues – crime, drugs, migration, political expression, human rights – have a way of manifesting themselves by actions that affect our national interests.

Tightening sanctions or remaining on the present path ignores the fact that at some point we will have to deal with long-festering issues and a transition, which may not proceed as smoothly as we'd like. As Dr. Samuel Huntington notes, "Democracies don't fight each other – but emerging democracies do."²¹

Strategic Outreach is the one option that directly addresses national security concerns. By ensuring a thorough review of our own domestic agenda is accomplished, we can ensure that U.S. interests are considered and ultimately crafted into a foreign policy that is not "anti-Castro" as some scholars characterize our present approach, but *pro-U.S.*²²

Must be goal and objective-oriented.

A balanced U.S.-Cuba foreign policy should consist of a clearly stated objective, the means by which the U.S. hopes to achieve that objective, and a feedback mechanism that will allow the government to assess effectiveness of the policy and adjust as needed. In the case of present U.S.-Cuba policy, the objectives (as embodied in Helms-Burton) are first to protect U.S. citizens from confiscation of properties and the illegal trafficking of said properties, accomplished through the embargo and isolation of the Cuban government, and then to assist the Cuban people in regaining their freedom and prosperity, accomplished by a loose collection of activities often referred to as “Track II” actions (per their designation as the second of three platforms in the Cuban Democracy Act of 1992).²³ Currently lacking is any articulation of how the U.S. measures the effectiveness of the approach.

The authors believe the goals of U.S. policy should be re-validated to determine their relevance in modern times. Only then should a course of action be developed which considers the balance between domestic needs and foreign policy. As Ambassador Cowal has publicly stated, “We shouldn’t necessarily be concerned about reciprocity. We should do what’s right for the U.S.”²⁴ Without ensuring that the present goals embodied in Helms-Burton remain relevant, there is no way to assess the law’s effectiveness. To this day, opposing sides vehemently debate whether the embargo against Cuba has helped (or will help) hasten its demise and prepare it for democracy, or whether it has provided Castro with a convenient scapegoat for Cuba’s societal ills.²⁵ On the world stage, many question the right of the US to “manage” the affairs of Cuba at all.²⁶

Efforts to reach out to the Cuban people appear disjointed and random, which also prevents any assessment of their effectiveness. One State Department official we spoke with claimed there was no effort to bring order to efforts conducted under Section 109 of Helms-Burton, which authorizes humanitarian efforts.²⁷ Without the State Department serving as a “clearing house” for activities, the role has been filled by non-governmental organizations that are clearly aligned with the interests of their own membership. This situation leaves the authors asking: Who ensures that the actions carried out within the boundaries of Helms-Burton are oriented toward achieving goals that are good for US interests? And without ensuring that the goals as presently stated are relevant, why do we continue on the same path we’ve pursued for 40 plus years?

We believe that immediately normalizing relations between the US and Cuba squanders an opportunity to negotiate real change and to weigh in on matters that the US holds as core values, while tightening sanctions intensifies an existing practice that has been a lightning rod for controversy. Strategic Outreach, however, focuses on first clarifying our goals, and then enacting measures that seek both near and long-term effects. The policy is designed such that successive, incremental steps can occur based on “negotiated” behavior. Strategic Outreach is a systematic attempt to bring structure to the “ad hoc approach to outreach”²⁸ the US is presently engaged in.

Must be realistic and feasible for both countries.

Strategic Outreach combines practicality, respect for sovereignty, and morality with a systematic problem-solving solution. While the present relationship between the U.S. and Cuba prevents short-term political perturbations, the authors believe that in the long run, Strategic Outreach is the *only* approach that is both realistic and feasible. Until this

issue is viewed as a whole, rather than just in bits and pieces (the “salami tactic” criticized by Dan Fisk of the Heritage Foundation²⁹), we will not be able to assemble a strategy that is best focused on achieving U.S. objectives.

Our findings indicate that domestic politics have prevented the U.S. from embarking on a new path more in line with present objectives to better serve the U.S. Statistics appear to indicate the time is right to try something different. Ambassador Cowal cites 55% of Americans wanting an immediate lift of the embargo, 75% wanting incremental change, and 84% of the Cuban community in south Florida believing the embargo has failed.³⁰ In light of these statistics, and in conjunction with the other reasoning previously presented, we believe that further tightening the sanctions, or remaining on the present path is not realistic or feasible for our desired end results.

Must use trust-building measures in a low-threat environment.

In an address to the Foreign Policy Research Institute, Alberto Coll of the U.S. Naval War College argued that the Vietnam model used by the U.S. to influence relations with Vietnam might have direct applicability to the present U.S.-Cuba situation.³¹ Similar to that complex negotiation, points of agreement rather than points of dissension will be required to provide both the U.S. and Cuba with the stable footing necessary to move forward. Only through mutual agreement and dogged focus on several key points will the two nations be able to look past the ideological differences that overshadow them. In the 1980s, it was the U.S.’s desire to recover our MIAs and Vietnam’s eventual openness to others outside the communist tent that allowed the two nations to embark on a path of normalization.³²

Strategic Outreach allows for each nation to search for mutually agreeable issues upon which a “negotiated” position could be arranged. Through the contacts envisioned in Phase I, potential areas of agreement can be discussed away from the public eye, thus allowing each nation a low-risk opportunity to begin constructing a path toward normalization. Athletic and cultural avenues serve as opportunities to bring societies together, but academic, business, and government officials stand the best chance of finding issues of national importance on which we could share a common focus.³³

Continuing on with our present policy, or further tightening sanctions against Cuba runs counter to this criterion and will sabotage any possibility of agreement between our two countries. Proponents demand democracy, free enterprise, human rights – all noble objectives – unconditionally. We believe such high-level demands only further delay any meaningful interchange between the nations, and prevent the small, incremental steps that are necessary to begin unraveling 40 years of emotional and political distance. Ambassador Sally Grooms Cowal stated, “Fidel may be looking for a way out, but we won’t know until we begin looking at confidence building measures. They’ve worked with other countries.”³⁴

The immediate diplomatic normalization that some people may be calling for does not provide for the maturation process necessary to resolve important issues. Establishing full diplomatic and political ties, without first finding the necessary common ground, will not resolve deep-seated issues that exist on both sides of the Florida Straits. The low-risk opportunity afforded by Strategic Outreach ensures that issues, while they may be contentious, will be addressed and will not fester.

Strategic Outreach begins with low-level contact, which mitigates the risk of public failure. It is respectful of sovereignty, and focuses on seeking similarities and trust-building measures en-route to a mature, normalized relationship.

Diligent investigation of issues is necessary due to complexity.

A critical evaluation point when dealing with any complex issue is how well the proposed solution appeases the interested parties. The U.S.-Cuba situation has numerous interested parties, all of whom present the potential to make their interests known in a very public and politicized manner. A short list of those who would be directly influenced by (and who would attempt to directly influence the process of) any change in relations would include Castro, Cuban citizens and businesses, American businesses, Cuban expatriates and next-generation Cuban-American citizens, congressional leaders and their constituents, and executive branch leaders and agencies. In a situation where *understanding* means not only listening to but decrypting the bluff and rhetoric from 40 years, it's apparent that a long-term solution will require tenacity, diplomacy, and a willingness to see past the existing emotions.

We believe that immediate normalization would squander an opportunity to address long-standing divisive issues, and would trivialize the importance of those issues. Another reality is that after 40 years, neither country is prepared to immediately engage and shake hands. As Ambassador Cowal has stated, “The shock to Cuba’s system would be too great to bear.”³⁵ And, as Ambassador Dennis Hays, Executive VP of the Cuban American National Foundation also pointed out, the uncertainty of Castro’s actions once cash flows into Cuba again should provide caution.³⁶ While easing some restrictions

may be a desirable short-term pursuit, we believe that complete normalization will require an arduous process of negotiation.

Tightening sanctions or remaining on the present path seems to cut off the possibility of addressing issues in a meaningful, open manner. Instead, the hard-line approach seems to push the two nations further apart, to the detriment of those who would appreciate a more open approach, and to the benefit of those who would wish to isolate the U.S. as well as Cuba.

Strategic Outreach is the only approach that advocates a thorough investigation of all issues, domestic and foreign, in order to arrive at a resolution. At a recent open forum event at Harvard University entitled *U.S. Cuba Policy: Directions for Change*, Alberto Coll cited corruption, crime, drugs, property claims, and economic problems as issues the U.S. will likely contend with in the near future.³⁷ Only Strategic Outreach looks at finding ways to address those issues sooner rather than later.

Must be flexible to allow U.S. to adapt to shifting international landscape.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to accurately predict how the events of the world will unfold or what impact their occurrence will have throughout society. The collapse of the Soviet Union, the rapid advance of communications technology, and more recently the terrorist attacks of September 11th are all unique events that rippled through the global community with often unpredictable consequences. Only those prepared to adapt to such a fluid nature of reality will truly thrive in such a world. The authors believe that US policy should allow that flexibility. Yet, the present U.S. position toward Cuba is essentially stagnated in a law the authors believe is frozen in time. The embargo and sanctions codified within Helms-Burton now require an act of Congress to overturn,

which is quite different from an executive order, under which the sanctions were once emplaced. This essentially “infringes upon the President’s authority under the Constitution to conduct foreign policy.”³⁸ As previously mentioned, President Bush appears to be staying on the current path, and has commissioned an internal review of Cuba policy, which will most likely reaffirm his position.

While the President must have the flexibility to lead in changing times, Congress, as the ultimate representation of our society, must be involved with gauging the U.S.’s needs as a whole. Recent delegations to Cuba and recently formed working groups that consist largely of present and former members of Congress offer investigation and opinions that are critical to ensuring all issues are considered and appropriately vetted. Members of Congress will often lead the way on breaking new ground and clearing the way toward new approaches. Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-ND) has cited our recent engagement with both China and Vietnam as positive examples to learn from,³⁹ and eight current members of the House of Representatives who oppose the embargo have recently formed an ad hoc working group to press for broader engagement with Cuba.⁴⁰

The present Helms-Burton law allows very limited flexibility. The President has repeatedly waived enactment of Title III, but has publicly stated that he would pursue vigorous enforcement of the remainder of the law if required (though neither he nor former President Clinton has done so). This likely means enforcing Title VI and also clamping down on travel conducted under Sect 109, which allows for humanitarian and educational engagement. The Treasury Department is responsible for licenses granted to educational and humanitarian institutions, and there is divided opinion on their enforcement of the law. While the Bush administration claims travelers have bypassed or

abused the licensing procedure, some advocates cry for the Treasury Department to further relax or eliminate the requirement of licensing altogether.⁴¹ The authors believe the point is moot, and that the entire law should be reconsidered for relevance.

We believe that Helms-Burton or the option of tightening sanctions in an attempt to force democratic reform creates an overly restrictive definition of success that disables the President's ability to *lead*. The 40-year focus has been punitive in nature and fails to take vision of the bigger international picture, the potential end-state, or the dangers of a probable emerging democracy. The present policy wastes the opportunity to capitalize on the shifting world landscape. The events of September 11th opened the door for the U.S. to explore alliances not before considered. Only Strategic Outreach and its systematic approach to resolving the impasse with Cuba would allow the flexibility to look at Cuba in a new light.

Must begin prior to Castro's demise, to give emerging leaders the opportunity to exert influence.

The authors believe that some flexibility and modification of our US objectives and a focus on long term vs. short-term political goals would reveal that engagement with Cuba, particularly the moderates who stand to gain influence upon Castro's passing, would be time well-spent. Shawn Malone, coordinator of the Cuba Program at the Georgetown University Caribbean Project, states:

"By focusing on punishing Castro, the U.S. hinders its pursuit of key objectives, such as laying the groundwork for better relations with future Cuban leaders... Most problematic is Washington's failure to fully recognize that Cuba's current second-tier leaders – including ministers, vice ministers, military officers and businesspeople – are highly likely to take the reins in a post-Castro era. The U.S. nonetheless limits engagement with these individuals, diminishing the possibility of establishing confidence-building ties that might positively influence a process of change."⁴²

Cuba perceives continuing with the status quo, or tightening sanctions, as an attempt to subvert from within, which conceivably alienates moderates. (And as Ambassador Hays noted, “Our policy’s stated aim is overthrow through peaceful means from within.”⁴³) Therefore, our policy keeps us from engaging in two manners: by express isolation, and by encouraging the wholesale dismantling of the present government from within, which offends many of those who could possibly help in the future.

We believe that to ensure stability and remove the cloud of uncertainty, future leaders must be engaged now, before Fidel Castro is gone. While the U.S. would like to see a peaceful transition to democracy, that outcome is not a guarantee. Other transitions have been bumpy – similar to those that took place in the former Soviet Union and Warsaw pact countries in the early 1990s⁴⁴, – and there are many who believe that without prior engagement, the opportunities for a peaceful transition are risky. Will Raul be able to maintain stability, or will residents’ desires for a more open government finally boil over? Without the current government, which has for all practical purposes exercised strict control over all state activities for 40-plus years, several stability factors could conceivably disappear. Working now with Cuba’s future leaders may help prevent an implosion, and should be seen as a hedge against mass migration, increased crime and drug trafficking.⁴⁵

Strategic Outreach plants the seeds of democracy in a systematic approach by reaching out to those people who stand the best chance of influencing Cuba’s future. The authors posit that the U.S. shouldn’t, as some seem to advocate, merely stand back and squeeze Cuba tighter, or to simply provide tacit support for a peaceful overthrow of the Cuban government by impoverished citizens. We believe that if the U.S. waits until

Castro is dead before engaging with Cuba, that those with a voice of reason may merely be one voice among many crying to be heard in an atmosphere of anarchy. Rather, we must begin now to plant those ideas we consider to be essential. The U.S. need not wait another ten to fifteen years to introduce the concepts of democracy, human rights, capitalism and free trade into Cuba. Castro may not immediately act on them in a manner the U.S. finds favorable, but a flood of ideas targeted toward future pro-U.S. moderate's stands a better chance of breaking a 40-year-old deadlock than the continued embargo of material goods.

Must realistically consider the forces of globalization.

In *The Lexus And The Olive Tree*, Thomas Friedman relates a story that originally appeared in *National Geographic*, in which the rector of the Cuban Communist Party's Nico Lopez school for advanced studies provides a peek at how globalism has affected even Cuba. When asked to comment on the difficulties of retaining socialism even as capitalist measures were being used to keep the island alive, Raul Valdes Vivo stated, "Cuba is no longer an island. There are no islands anymore. There is only one world."⁴⁶ And yet, we know Fidel continues to distance Cuba from the world at large through his rhetoric, and opportunities such as free enterprise and private ownership of businesses by citizens elude the Cuban population.

At the same time, prior to September 11th, President Bush had begun to pursue a path of independence for the U.S. As one scholar has said,

"Our global neighborhood needs to be infused with a culture of neighborhood values. The United States attests to this need in some areas of foreign policy, but seems to reserve the right to abandon them when they get in the way of short term national interest considerations as perceived from time to time through domestic political lenses: Helms-Burton legislation, the abandonment of the Kyoto Protocol, the scrapping

of the IBM treaties, opting out of the International Criminal Court – and now, it seems, out of the humanitarian norms of the Vienna convention.”⁴⁷

What is it that causes these two nations to embrace the concept of globalism yet act in a manner that seems opposed? For the U.S., it is perhaps raw power, an honorable belief in democracy, and a desire for open markets that allow and motivate it to chart its own path; for Cuba, it is perhaps the mindset of a leader desperately holding onto his personal legacy. For both, pursuing a path toward normalization will involve acknowledging the powers shaping the world environment and using them to their advantage.

Should U.S. concerns alone be considered if seeking a long-term solution? No. Other nations reject the concept that the United States will manage peaceful democratic change through its foreign policy by relying solely on isolation and sanctions.⁴⁸ And in attempting to isolate Cuba, the United States has achieved the paradoxical effect of isolating itself on the world stage, and is now unable to “foster an international atmosphere capable of challenging Havana.”⁴⁹

For these reasons, we believe continuing with the present Helms-Burton policy or further tightening sanctions will only exacerbate the situation and will prepare neither Cuba nor the U.S. for the near future. Our own allies and trading partners openly do business with Cuba and disregard the American embargo and provisions under Helms-Burton. Ambassador Dennis Hays, in a public debate at Harvard University this year, claimed that Canada, Italy, Mexico and France have yet to bring about wholesale changes in Cuba’s politics or human rights records. Yet, we do know that operating from within puts them closer than the U.S. is to achieving that goal. The Pope and foreign leaders, who met with representatives of the Cuban opposition movement during a 1999 Ibero-

American summit in Havana, are clearly better positioned to influence Castro and the Cuban population.⁵⁰

The policy of isolating Cuba through sanctions positions the U.S. as a unilateral actor in a multilateral world. For that reason, we believe that Strategic Outreach, which seeks to use international leverage only after closely reexamining the relationship between our domestic agenda and our foreign policy, is the only viable option.

Notes

¹⁸ Jorge Dominguez, personal interview, Sept. 2001.

¹⁹ *Understanding Sanctions Policy in the 21st Century: Rethinking the Dialogue; Report of an Emerging From Conflict Conference, March 29-April 1, 2001* (Iowa: The Stanley Foundation) 8.

²⁰ Dennis K. Hays, personal interview, 4 March 2002.

²¹ Samuel Huntington, address to National Security Fellowship, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, 1 March 2002.

²² Jack Buechner, former member of Congress (R-MO), quoted in *U.S. Cuba Policy: Directions for Change; Final Report from A Center for National Policy Conference, November 15, 2000* (Washington, DC: Center for National Policy), 2.

²³ Castro-Marino, 9.

²⁴ Sally Grooms Cowal and Dennis K. Hays, public debate, Harvard University, 13 Dec. 2001.

²⁵ Debate, 13 Dec. 01.

²⁶ Sir Shridath Ramphal, *The Road Not Taken*, keynote address to a Stanley Foundation Policy Workshop entitled *How Should Cuba Fit In US Strategy Formulation*, Virginia, 24 Jan. 2002.

²⁷ Messrs. James Carragher, Simon Henshaw, and Vincent Mayer, Jr., personal interview, September, 2001.

²⁸ Cowal, interview.

²⁹ Dan Fisk, quoted in *U.S. Cuba Policy, Directions*, 9.

³⁰ Debate, 13 Dec. 01.

³¹ Coll, 4 Oct. 2001.

³² Le Linh Lan, *The Changing Pattern of Interaction Between Vietnam and the US: From Confrontation to Cooperation*, address, 42nd Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Chicago, 20-24 Feb. 2001.

³³ Dominguez, interview.

³⁴ Cowal, interview.

³⁵ Cowal, interview.

³⁶ Hays, interview.

³⁷ Alberto Coll, quoted in *U.S. Cuba Policy: Directions*, 2, 11.

³⁸ Warren Christopher, personal note to Newt Gingrich, quoted in Groombridge, 3.

Notes

³⁹ Byron Dorgan, D-ND, quoted in *U.S. Cuba Policy: Directions*, 3.

⁴⁰ Peter Slevin, *Pursuing an Opening to Cuba: Lawmakers Form Working Groups* (Washington Post: www.washingtonpost.com, 9 March 2002).

⁴¹ *Approaches to Engagement* 6.

⁴² Shawn Malone, *Cuba: Policy Agenda for the Future*, (Washington: Georgetown University) 3.

⁴³ Hays, interview.

⁴⁴ Davis, 15 August, 2001.

⁴⁵ *Cuba: Approaches*, 1.

⁴⁶ Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus And The Olive Tree*, (New York: Anchor Books, 2000) 68.

⁴⁷ Ramphal, address.

⁴⁸ *Sanctions Policy*, 06.

⁴⁹ *U.S. Cuba Policy: Directions*, 2, 11.

⁵⁰ *U.S. Cuba Policy*, 5.

Recommendations

Conflict is not inevitable. Distrust need not be permanent. Peace is possible when we break free of old patterns and habits of hatred.

—President George W. Bush⁵¹

At each step of the process, in the near-, mid-, or long-term, we advocate using the leverage of the greater voice to move ahead. We have recommended Strategic Outreach as a systematic approach to unravel this Gordian knot in a phased approach:

- **In the near term, we advocate allowing universities, think tanks, and the power of citizens and their representatives to help clarify our policy.**
- **Afterward, we recommend allowing non-governmental organizations (NGOs), foundations, and the power of an elected Congress to reach out and educate the citizens of our nation, and the citizens of Cuba as well, as to what we consider reasonable policy.**
- **In the long run, we recommend seeking acceptance and legitimacy of our policy by encouraging international organizations – the United Nations, the World Trade Organization, the European Union, the Organization of American States – to provide the leverage to seek reforms that will bring Cuba into the 21st century.**

We offer recommendations linked to available elements of national power (political/diplomatic, information, economic, and military). Military power, with the exception of its role as a diplomatic tool, was not considered a realistic tool, and it becomes very clear that a comprehensive approach such as Strategic Outreach will require a careful blending of the tools of influence.

- **A bipartisan committee, established by the President, is essential for clarifying our domestic agenda in the near future.** The “political/diplomatic” instrument of power is most valuable in achieving a bipartisan assessment of our current domestic goals, as well as realistic foreign policy. The President must reassert his leadership role in foreign policy. His formation of a blue-ribbon panel consisting of congressional members, business leaders, and academicians will signal to the U.S. population that he will make foreign policy based on national interests and not be held hostage to vocal interest groups. Additionally, such a panel will signal to the world that the U.S. is indeed ready for a more pragmatic relationship with Cuba.
- **We recommend the Bush administration take the lead role in assessing the wisdom of our present policy.** If President Bush does not lead this effort now his administration may be forced to play catch-up in the near future, for there is widespread momentum in the U.S. Congress for a change in our policy toward Cuba⁵². An ad hoc working group comprising eight Democratic and Republican members of the House of Representatives is pressing for a broader opening to the communist government, and intends to push for increased trade, expanded social exchanges between our two countries, and reversal of the U.S. travel ban policy.⁵³ Some members of Congress who previously voted in favor of the Helms-Burton Act are now having a change of heart. Rep. Mark Sanford (R-SC) is one of those members: “It was my personal visit down there that turned my thinking on this issue and I think the same would be true for any other member of Congress that goes down there.”⁵⁴ Congress is considering measures that would allow American companies to finance sales to Cuba, further opening the law signed into effect in October 2000 that

allowed sales of some food items and medicines to Cuba on a “cash and carry” basis.

Cuba’s recent decision to expand purchases of American agricultural products shows that they too may be willing to ease their own hard line rhetoric towards the U.S.⁵⁵

- **We must close the information gap that exists between the nations.** Further recommendations, relying heavily on a balance of all instruments of power, can achieve this. As a minimum, academic, artistic and athletic cultural exchanges must be continued, with some additional focus on how they could tie to our policy goals.
- **We recommend an increase in our participation in joint medical research with the Cuban medical community.** Cuba has long held its medical community up as a shining beacon in the Caribbean basin, and joint efforts in scientific exploration and cooperation must be viewed as a humanitarian endeavor.
- **We recommend greater government-to-government contact with moderates in Cuba.** Cooperative endeavors to develop and enforce migration policy and stem the flow of drug trafficking have occurred when situations reached crisis levels in the past. We now advocate that greater contact become the norm rather than the exception, and that opportunities be actively sought to bring together government representatives from both countries before crises occur.
- **We recommend more emphasis be placed on engaging Cuba’s current second-echelon officials.** As Cuba’s likely future leaders, they must be brought into the dialogue sooner rather than later - the end results will be more productive for both the United States and Cuba. U.S. policy toward Cuba needs to focus on the positive. We should abandon our obsession with the current regime so that we may evaluate and

prepare for the challenge and opportunities that are expected to arise in the near future (post-Fidel).

- **We should eliminate the remaining restrictions on granting visas to mid- and high-level Cuban government officials and permit (and even encourage) regular communication between them and their U.S. counterparts.** This would also serve our stated desire of exposing Cubans to the virtues and benefits of multi-party democracy and free markets.
- **We recommend that a national agenda of relevant issues, drawn perhaps from the results of the previously suggested bipartisan commission, be used as fodder to bring together the great minds of both countries to seek common ground.** Issues such as human rights, barriers to economic success, and reparations for nationalized properties offer fertile ground for debate, and ensure that a clear focus is placed on issues vital (and relevant) to our foreign policy. Presently, forums sponsored by universities and think tanks offer the opportunity for each country's government, business, and academic representatives to get together and debate issues. The expanded use of academic forums is a beneficial opportunity to address these issues.
- **The authors recommend that stringent licensure requirements presently administered by the Treasury Department be loosened, and that travel restrictions be eased.** With the influx of cash that has arrived through other international travelers, Fidel Castro has not mounted a new communist offensive, and the authors believe the cross-cultural exchanges (and American influence) possible with greater travel offset the negative effect of Cuba receiving American dollars. We

need to put at ease any fear Cubans have about “Yankee interference” in their country, and becoming accustomed to the faces, values, and norms of U.S. travelers would go a long way toward accomplishing this. This kind of “people-to-people diplomacy” could make a significant difference in the way the Cuban people feel about Americans and America.⁵⁶ These gestures by the United States will only help to create goodwill among Cuba’s future leadership and populace. When agriculture legislation was enacted in October 2000 that eased the sale of some food items to Cuba, opponents of the measure ensured that another area of the law was tightened – travel. We don’t believe the consequences of this prohibition have ever been fully considered, nor do we believe the prohibition is justified. To be clear, the authors don’t necessarily believe that unilaterally lifting all restrictions is in the U.S.’s best interests; however, some consideration should be given to easing restrictions that punish the Cuban population and prevent U.S. citizens from exercising their own civil rights.

- **The U.S. must reframe the issue from a bilateral concern between our nation and Cuba into an opportunity to bring together numerous voices and opinions.** The authors believe the essence of restructuring U.S.-Cuba policy and breaking the impasse lies in reaching out to others and building consensus – on a local, regional, national and international basis.

Clearly, this list of recommendations is not exhaustive. Even as this paper is being completed, former President Carter is assembling a group to travel to Cuba in May 2002, with the express permission of the President and the State Department. The ultimate intent and goals of his mission are unknown at this point. But, Carter will be the highest-

profile U.S. figure to visit the island in forty-three years and is expected to meet directly with Fidel Castro, who has expressed his eagerness over such an exchange. The authors believe that with strategy, patience, and a willingness to take moderate risks, President George W. Bush stands a good chance at presiding over the first meaningful change to our Cuban policy in more than 40 years.

Notes

⁵¹ George W. Bush, national address, 4 April 2002.

⁵² Center for National Policy, “U.S. Policymakers and Foreign Policy Experts Call for Change in U.S. Cuba Policy”, (Washington: <http://www.cnponline.org/Press%20Releases/PRUSCuba11-15-00.htm>, 21 November 2000).

⁵³ Slevin, March 2002.

⁵⁴ Mark Sanford, quoted in *U.S. Cuba Policy, Directions*, 8.

⁵⁵ Mark Frank, *US Ship Takes Historic cargo to Cuba* (Boston Globe, www.boston.com/globe, 17 December 01).

⁵⁶ *U.S. Cuba Policy, Directions*, 9.

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